

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 8, 2003

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John Barnett
John Becton
Searcy Ewell
Lindi Johnson
Maria Morais

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Pierre Curry
Ramona Sangalli

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Jim Adams
Nola McKinney
Buddy Spivey

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Jim Hill
Donna Hunt

DHS Representative: Artee Williams

Attorney General's Office Representative: Tom Gay

DSB Staff Present: Jim Hudson, Katy Morris, Coral Virden, Carolyn Holbrook, Richard Behra, Jim Pearson, Lyndel Lybarger, Donna Hartzell

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Mr. John Barnett made a motion to accept the agenda. Mr. Searcy Ewell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

INTRODUCTIONS.

APPROVAL OF THE 12/14/02 MINUTES. Motion was made by Mr. John Barnett and seconded by Mr. Searcy Ewell to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2002 Board Meeting. Motion passed.

DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT -Ms. Linda Paxton, Field Services Administrator, retired March 1, 2003. Mr. Lyndel Lybarger is interim Field Services Administrator.

REAUTHORIZATION -Reauthorization is under consideration in Washington. At this point in the negotiations, DSB's VR program will receive a 2.1 percent increase in federal funding or \$79,000; the staff training program will lose one-half of 1 percent or

\$130; the Older Blind Program will receive an 11.3 percent increase or \$26,000; Supported Employment will decrease by 3.0 percent or \$1,200; Independent Living will decrease by 3.6 percent, which is also \$1,200. Overall, these projected changes represent a total increase for DSB of \$102,000 in federal funding or two and one-half percent.

SENATE BILL 45 - If signed into law, this bill would transfer DSB from the Department of Human Services to the newly created Labor, Employment and Workforce Department. The intended effect of SB45 is to consolidate 53 departments of various sizes throughout state government into 10 umbrella departments. DHS analysts indicate there would be no change in DSB program or administrative functions under SB45. The program functions of the DSB Board would also see no change. However Board authority for administrative direction would transfer to the Secretary of the new department of Labor, Employment and Workforce. Since DSB's mission is focused on employment, the agency has more in common with Labor, Employment and Workforce, than with the Department of Human Services. Under SB45, DHS will combine with Health to become the Department of Health and Human Services.

SENATE BILL 166 -During budget considerations, Governor Huckabee recommended the agency's \$325,000 request for increased general revenue for the Older Blind Program in 2004 and 2005. However, the request has not been recommended at this time by the legislature in DSB's appropriation bill, Senate Bill 166. If the request for additional general revenue is not approved, the Older Blind Program services provided to consumers will be forced to downsize significantly. The staff of the Older Blind Program will be increasingly diverted to serve vocational rehabilitation consumers, where there is a documented need, and the agency will have to eliminate a portion of the Older Blind Program staff.

2003 CONSUMER CONVENTION -Because of the funding situation this year, significant cuts have already been taken in various expenditure areas. Out of State travel has been greatly reduced, and DSB will not be sponsoring the customary 4 to 5 staff members attending ACB and NFB National conventions. To minimize costs this year, with Board approval, DSB proposes to designate Mrs. Nola McKinney and Mrs. Maria Morais as DSB representatives attending ACB and NFB respectively. All such travel would be subject to state travel regulations, and in the event either board member cannot attend, she will designate another board member to represent DSB at the appropriate consumer convention. **Mr. Barnett made a motion to accept the proposal. Mr. Ewell seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

The Arkansas Council of the Blind State Convention will be held in Springdale, Arkansas, March 21 and 22, 2003. Due to travel restrictions, DSB will send only three staff members to participate in the convention.

ARKANSAS RADIO READING SERVICES FOR THE BLIND NETWORK -The current board of ARRSBN is moving to downsize the number of positions and change its name to reflect the new organizational structure. It is seeking new board members and applications are available.

VENDING FACILITY PROGRAM -The program currently has two new trainees. One trainee has completed training and has a location in Little Rock. There are currently

twenty-eight locations. The Springdale location has been closed due to lack of interest.

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT FINDINGS - Last fiscal year, Auditors discovered questionable purchasing activities by a DSB clerical staff member in Pine Bluff. The staff member has subsequently resigned. As required by law, the case has been referred to the Arkansas State Police. If audit concerns are verified, the State Police will submit the case to the prosecuting attorney.

DSB EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR -Only DSB staff who receive a satisfactory or better rating on their yearly performance evaluation are eligible for consideration for DSB Employee of the Year. Last year, the DHS employee evaluation period was moved to end March 31, 2003 (too late for the March board meeting). Therefore the DSB 2002 Employee of the Year announcement was moved to the June 8, 2002 board meeting. It is again necessary to postpone the DSB Employee of the Year announcement to the June 14, 2003 board meeting because of the extended DHS performance evaluation schedule. Nominations of eligible staff members will be referred to the DSB Board Personnel Committee following completion of the evaluation process April 15.

END OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chairman Lindi Johnson named Mr. Becton, Mr. Ewell and Mr. Barnett to serve on the DSB Board Personnel Committee, which will consider the nominations for DSB Employee of the Year 2003. Mr. Barnett will serve as chairman of the committee.

DSB 2002 CLIENT SURVEY REPORT-1379 surveys were mailed in appropriate media. Some 540 surveys were returned, which was up 4 percent from 2001. The survey consisted of four major questions:

Question 1: Have you been satisfied with services you have received; yes or no? Some 491 responded yes, down 2.5 percent from 2001.

Question 2: When was the last time you had contact with your counselor (30, 60, 90 or more than 90 days)? DSB performance was up 3.5 percent from 2001 with 81.4% of respondents indicating contact within the required 90 Day window.

Question 3: What other services do you feel our agency can provide to help you be more independent? Some 67.3 percent of respondents indicated that they did not have any additional needs at this time, which was down 3.7 percent from 2001.

Question 4: Did you help choose the goals, the services and who will provide the services to you; yes or no? Some 82.5% responded favorably for 2002, regarding the clearly-communicated opportunity for choice, but this was down 3.9 percent from 2001. End of Report.

Mrs. Morais made a motion that the Board review and assist in the development of the Client Satisfaction questionnaire every September. Mr. Barnett seconded the DSB

motion. A copy of the current survey will be mailed in a preferred format to the board members to review prior to the September 2003 board meeting.

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER REPORT -No report was received and no representative was present.

ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT (AILC) -The report was submitted with the Board packets.

CONSUMER INPUT Mr. Ewell announced that the Madison Street Bowling Tournament will be held March 22, 2003 at the Professor West Bowling Alley in Little Rock at noon. The proceeds will provide a scholarship to a graduate from the Arkansas School for the Blind.

Mrs. Morais described her recent experience at the Washington Seminar held by the National Federation of the Blind in Washington, D.C. Three key issues are being tracked by NFB: Medicare; ensuring blind students receive accessible textbooks at the same time as their sighted peers; and raising the earnings limit for social security recipients so that blind persons may earn up to \$30,000 per year without forfeiting their benefits.

DSB QUARTERLY SUCCESS REPORT-DSB, the Arkansas School for the Blind and the State Department of Education made financial and in-kind contributions to support a weekend transition event initiated by the Arkansas Association of Blind Students. Deanna Lambert, president of the AABS reported to Chairman Johnson that the event held at the Arkansas School for the Blind was attended by eleven college students and was positive and very successful.

JUMPSTART -The program starts June 8 through July 3, 2003. The State department of Education has chosen not to participate financially this year, which means basically a loss of \$17,000. A progress report on Jump Start will be given at the June 14, 2003 board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next DSB Board meeting is scheduled at 10:00 a.m., June 14, 2003 at the Donaghey Plaza South building, First Floor, Conference Room A.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nola McKinney

Secretary